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LAPAROSCOPE USED TO TREAT ULCERS: For the first time in the United States, MCW surgeons at the Milwaukee County Medical Complex successfully used a laparoscopy to perform an extremely precise operation to treat ulcers. A team lead by **Constantine Frantzides, MD, PhD**, assistant professor of surgery at MCW, performed the three-hour operation.

The traditional surgical technique, known as highly selective vagotomy, has been used to treat ulcers for years. However, it requires a large abdominal incision, an eight to twelve-day hospital stay and a four-to-six week recuperation period. With the availability of specialized instruments, Dr. Frantzides was able to do the highly selective vagotomy using a laparoscope.

"After becoming comfortable with the technique in the laboratory, we felt it was time to take our experience to the clinical setting," he said. "We can now offer an identical operation, except that it is performed through five small punctures in the abdomen, rather than a huge incision. The principal advantages are that patients experience only minimum pain, stay only a few days in the hospital and should be able to return to normal activities within one week."

The patient, Jan Steuer, 47, of Milwaukee, recovered from the three-hour surgery nicely, according to Dr. Frantzides. She had suffered from ulcer disease for years and, despite medication, had recurrent problems. The day after the procedure, she was taking a liquid diet. The following day she took a full diet and was discharged from the hospital. After traditional surgery, she would have been hospitalized for eight to 12 days, according to Dr. Frantzides.

Laparoscopic surgery uses a laparoscope, a long, metal tube equipped with a tiny fiber optic camera, which is inserted into the abdominal cavity through a small incision above the navel to guide the surgeon's movements. The surgical instruments are also introduced through long metal tubes, inserted through tiny punctures at the site, and the surgical team views the procedure on two video monitors. With this technique, only five small incisions for the tubes are required, rather than the huge incision.

Ulcers, which affect one out of 10 Americans, are caused by excess acid produced by the stomach. Two nerves, called the vagus nerves, located along the front and back of the stomach, stimulate the stomach to produce acid. Cutting these nerves decreases acid production. Unfortunately, cutting them can also produce serious side effects. During highly selective vagotomy, only the tiny branches of these nerves are cut. Acid production is then decreased and side effects are avoided.

"Ulcer operations are not performed as frequently today as they were in the past because there are now very effective medications," Dr. Frantzides said. However, without ongoing medical therapy, 80 percent of all ulcers will recur within one year and many people require lifelong therapy. Those who have ongoing symptoms, or complications such as recurrent bleeding and side effects from medication — or those who simply refuse to take medicine every day — are candidates for the operation," he said.

THIRD LUNG TRANSPLANT PERFORMED: Roger Smith, of Beloit, is the recipient of the third lung transplant performed by **George Haasler, MD**, associate professor of surgery (cardiothoracic), and director of the Lung Transplant Program. The transplant, performed on March 13, is the first right lung transplant performed at Milwaukee County Medical Complex (MCMC). Mr. Smith, 55, was suffering from end-stage chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. He was placed on the United Network of Organ Sharing (UNOS) list and waited 14 months for the transplant.

Mr. Smith is currently under the care of **Donald Schlueter, MD**, professor of medicine (pulmonary and critical care), and transplant pulmonologist. Former lung transplant patients Ms. Phyllis Mikulski and Mr. Ralph Rockwell, the first and second recipients respectively of lung transplants performed by Dr. Haasler, visited Mr. Smith during his stay in the intensive care unit at MCMC. "Everyone is looking forward to seeing Mr. Smith and his family at the next

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